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RDC modifies Chinle business site lease for Navajo Code Talker

WINDOW ROCK – The Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0211-13 on Tuesday, which modifies a Chinle business site lease for a Navajo Code Talker, Fleming D. Begaye.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch' izhi) said the legislation would amend a business site lease belonging to Fleming D. Begaye, and replace his name with his daughter, Veronica Walters.

“Mr. Fleming owns one of the more successful businesses in Chinle and he’s ready to pass it onto the next generation,” said Delegate BeGaye. “The business does not owe anything and has a letter from the Bureau of Indian Affairs approving the lease renewal.”

Begay owns and operates a laundromat, gas station, convenience store, fast food facility, and automotive service within a single facility in Chinle.

In 2012, Fleming was denied a lease renewal by Navajo Area BIA director Sharon Pinto, however after Fleming filed an appeal his request was approved in May 2013.

Following the presentation, RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) questioned the location of establishment and if the business was subleasing to outside entities.

“The business is located at the major intersection in Chinle, where State Route 191 and Navajo Route 7 meet,” said Delegate BeGaye. “They are working with the Four Corners Giant Corporation for their gas station.”

Delegate Tsosie said that he does not believe business leases should permit lessees to sublease land, as it could possibly deter much needed tax revenue from the Nation.

“In my opinion there should be no subleasing because everything goes haywire when we try to collect sales taxes for the Nation,” said Delegate Tsosie. “However, I am going to support this legislation and trust that this is helping local economic development.”

The RDC approved Legislation No. 0211-13 with a vote of 3-0.

The Resources and Development Committee serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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